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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

An entire edition of the El Paso (Texas) "Times" was confiscated by the postmaster because the paper contained a synopsis of a court decision in relation to lotteries, on the ground that the decision indirectly advertised lotteries!

The London correspondent of the Boston "Herald," in writing about authors and literary and social movements, took occasion to describe Auberon Herbert's "voluntary taxation breakfast." That he botched the job, goes without saying. Of course there isn't a word of truth in the statement that Mr. Herbert "astonished" his friends by inviting them to such a breakfast. Mr. Herbert's views and plans are well known to his friends and published in his paper for the benefit of the rest of his fellow-citizens. Then the correspondent affects to believe that the ladies and gentlemen who made the speeches didn't know what they were talking about. It is much nearer the truth to say that *he* didn't know what the speakers were talking about. At any rate, it is to be hoped that the correspondent will continue to write about the English individualists and let the readers of his paper know what's going on. As a rule, the most interesting news is withheld from them.

Within a month two women who killed their lovers have been acquitted by New York juries. Mr. Pentecost professes to find in this action of the juries "delightful" evidence of the decay of the belief in capital punishment. The truth of course is that such action clearly testifies to the prevalence of fanatical and barbarous notions among the common people of the country, — to their utter lack of respect for equity, liberty, and individuality. The juries acquitted the women, not because they abhor capital punishment, but because they *believe in capital punishment even for crimes against current sexual morality.* The juries tacitly enunciated the monstrous doctrine that if a man desert a woman with whom he has maintained illicit relations, she is justified in killing him. The juries obviously regard human life as of less value than the sacred institution of marriage, and the only reason why they inflicted no punishment on the women, either for the mild offence of murder or for the heinous crime of sexual irregularity, is that they look upon women as inferior beings, without the right and power of voluntary assumption of responsibilities or making of contracts. The juries allowed the "dishonored victims" to go free, because they desired to give men a "terrible warning" and "teach them a lesson." If there is anything "delightful" in all this, Mr. Pentecost is the only man who penetrates to it.

Through the thoughtful kindness of my friend, John Henry Mackay, of Germany, I experienced a few days ago one of the pleasantest surprises of my life. For many years it has been my wish to obtain possession of a file of the newspapers which Proudhon edited in Paris during the years 1848, 1849, and 1850. Mackay has gratified this desire. Presumably after diligent search in the literary nooks and corners of Europe, he has unearthed the treasure, and has sent it to me as a present. I now have on my desk a complete file of "Le Peuple," and a file of "Le Représentant du Peuple" which lacks only the half-dozen numbers that the French government confiscated. I communicate this news to my readers, since they are likely to benefit indirectly by the generous act of our German comrade. This is a good time to state that Mackay's new book is nearly ready. I expect to receive it this month. As he has already announced in a letter to Liberty, its title will be "The Anarchists: Pictures of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century." An idea of the interesting character of this novel of four hundred pages may be formed from the following table of contents: Introduction. — I. In the Heart of the World-Metropolis. — II. The Eleventh Hour. — III. The Unemployed. — IV. Carrard Auban. V. The Champions of Liberty. — VI. The Empire of Hunger. — VII. The Tragedy of Chicago. — VIII. The Propaganda of Communism. — IX. Trafalgar Square. — X. Anarchy. The earliest opportunity will be taken to convey further information regarding this interesting volume, the arrival of which is awaited with the greatest eagerness in the office of Liberty.

The Boston "Herald" refused to insert an advertisement of Karl Heinzen's "Rights of Women and the Sexual Relations" on account of the wording of the title of the book. From the same issue of the "Herald" from which the advertisement was excluded I learn that "old Dr. Hall" supplies "medicines for infectious or poisonous diseases of the urinary organs" and "cures recent cases in one day, stopping mucous discharges, irritation, scalding, and inflammation"; that Dr. J. A. Bailey, whose "long and successful practice in the treatment of private diseases in both sexes is acknowledged by all, may be consulted confidentially from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M."; that Mrs. Dr. Bell supplies ladies with golden pills that relieve in three days, and charges only two two-cent stamps for a free trial; that only one box is required of Dr. Herman's German female pills; and that the Woman's Medical Home furnishes ladies "a regulator that never fails and is both a friend in need and a friend indeed." But the same readers before whom these disgusting quacks are allowed to extol their fraudulent and filthy wares must be protected from knowledge of the fact that a keen and honest thinker has written a book in the title of which the word "sexual" appears! Such hypocrisy is not surprising, however, on the part of a paper which General Butler once properly branded as "that vile, venal, and venereal sheet." But what are we to think when the same advertisement is rejected by the New York "Nation," whose managing editor, a son of William Lloyd Garrison, insults the memory of his father by virtually branding as indecent the work of a man whom his father was proud to consider his friend and neighbor?

The suspension of a Boston firm which was generally regarded as one of the most substantial on the street was a painful surprise to the business community. A member of the embarrassed house is reported to have said that the suspension was due, not to insolvency, but to inability to get ready money for immediate liabilities, and that the firm can pay its creditors in full. Referring to this statement the Boston "Herald" says: "Assuming its correctness, we do not hesitate to say that the suspension should not have been permitted to occur. It is a reproach to the banks if a well known house, with an honorable business record, and assets plainly exceeding its liabilities, was allowed to go down. On the supposition of such a condition of affairs, no Scotch or English firm of any standing is ever forced to the wall. The British banks recognize that a proper regard for their own safety, to say nothing of their duty to the mercantile community, calls them to support in times of stringency all solvent business houses that require assistance to carry them over the strain of the time. It would be a wise and proper thing if the sound principle found equal recognition on this side of the Atlantic." Instead of calling upon the banks to come to the assistance of solvent business houses, would it not be better to allow such firms to become members of free mutual banks, which could and would supply them with ready money free of interest charges? Why should a solvent firm be compelled to pay interest by law? These firms do not need the assistance of the banks or the government; they need liberty to help themselves. This liberty is denied by the government, with the approval of the "Herald."

A writer in the London "Academy," in reviewing "A Plea for Liberty," lumps it with what he ignorantly calls two other pleas for liberty, — Prof. Graham's "Socialism New and Old," and "The Eight Hours Day," by Sidney Webb and Harold Cox. Of Prof. Graham he says: "Speaking very cautiously, — so cautiously, indeed, that it is sometimes difficult to understand his exact position, — he argues that in many ways the State can exercise a beneficial control, and may usefully extend its functions without fear that the extension will end in the slavery which Mr. Spencer predicts. Yet even if Socialism were slavery, says Prof. Graham, 'it would still be a question of the comparison of the degree of slavery under the present system with that under Socialism full-blown.' In our modern communities there is no real freedom for the property-less, and by the force of the State something can be done to diminish the existing inequalities of opportunities. So that Prof. Graham also concludes with a plea for liberty." And of the advocates of limitation of the hours of labor, the reviewer says: "On what ground do they advocate this interference? Simply on this: that the liberty of some must be curtailed in order that the liberty of others may be extended. Here is also a plea for liberty." Such contradictory "pleas for liberty" puzzle the reviewer, and he tells the reader that he will not find in either of the books, or in all of them together, a solution of the question. As to which is the wisest plea, he says, it is not a subject that the "Academy" can discuss in its columns. Very true; but it does seem as if the "Academy" ought to know better than hand over books on Individualism and Socialism for review to a man who has no clearer conception of liberty than is possessed by the most ignorant of State Socialist writers. Intelligent men know that Prof. Graham and the eight-hour advocates do not plead for liberty, but for regulation. The question is not as to what liberty is, but whether liberty is better or worse than regulation. Instead of permitting an ignoramus to confuse his readers by talking to them about "three pleas for liberty," the "Academy" should simplify the problem by explaining that the readers are called upon to decide between one plea for liberty and two pleas for regulation.

Liberty.

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"*In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel.*" — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

☞ E. C. WALKER, formerly editor of "Fair Play" and now a regular contributor to the columns of Liberty, is also an authorized agent for Liberty and for all books and pamphlets published by Benj. R. Tucker.

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Equality and Justice.

It is interesting to follow the reasoning of Leslie Stephen in the essay on "Social Equality" contributed by him to the "International Journal of Ethics." What he offers on the subject of equality as conditioned by justice will certainly prove enlightening to those who are still more unsettled than he himself is. Moreover, he seems to be on the right track, and for us it only remains to point out the direction in which the final solution is to be sought and to suggest the method of overcoming the last obstacle.

Speaking of the difficulty (as it presents itself to him) which underlies the vital differences of method by which various schools attempt to answer the appeal for the equality prescribed by social justice, Mr. Stephen writes:

> "All men ought to be equal." If you mean equal in natural capacity or character, it is enough to say that what is impossible cannot be. If you propose that the industrious and idle, the good and bad, the wise and foolish, should share equally in social advantages, the reply is equally obvious, that such a scheme, if possible, would be injurious to the qualities on which human welfare depends. If you say that men should be rewarded solely according to their intrinsic merits, we must ask, do you mean to abstract from the adventitious advantages of education, social surroundings, and so forth, or to take men as they actually are, whatever the circumstances to which their development is owing? To ask what a man would have been had he been in a different position from his youth, is to ask for an impossible solution, and one, moreover, of no practical bearing. I shall not employ a drunkard if I am in want of a butler, whether he has become a drunkard under overpowering temptation or become a drunkard from inherited dipsomania. But if, on the other hand, I take the man for what he is, without asking how he has come to be what he is, I leave the source at least of all the vast inequalities of which we complain.

Having shown the complexity of the problem, Mr. Stephen remarks that "the bare doctrine of equality is not of necessity either unjust or impracticable." To demonstrate this he refers us to the principles of property and taxation, saying:

> Property is sacred, it is said, because a man has (or ought to have) a right to what he has made either by labor or by a course of fair dealings with other men. I am not about to discuss the ultimate ground on which the claim to private property is justified, and, as I think, satisfactorily established. A man has a right, we say, to all that he has fairly earned. Has he, then, a right to inherit what his father has earned? A man has had the advantage of all that a rich father can do for him in education, and so forth. Why should he also have the father's fortune without earning it? Are the merits of money so great that they are transmissible to posterity? Should a man who has been so good as to become rich be blessed even to the third and fourth generation? Why, as a matter of pure justice, should not all fortunes be applied to public uses on the death of the man who made them? Such a law, however impolitic, would not be incompatible with the moral principle to which an appeal is made. There are, of course, innumerable other ways in which laws may favor an equality of property without breaking any of the fundamental principles. What, for example, is the just method of distributing taxation? A rich man can not only pay more money than a poor man in proportion to his income, but he can with equal ease pay a greater proportion. To double the income of a laborer may be to raise him from starvation to comfort. To double the income of a millionaire may simply be to encumber him with wealth by which he is unable to increase his own pleasure. There is a limit beyond which it is exceedingly difficult to find ways of spending money on one's own enjoyment — though I have never been able to fix it precisely. On this ground such plans as a graduated income tax are, it would seem, compatible with the plea of justice; and, within certain limits, we do, in fact, approve of various taxes on the ground, real or supposed, that they tend to shift burdens from the poor to the rich and so far to equalize wealth. In fact, this appeal to justice is a tacit concession of the principle. If we justify property on the ground that it is fair that a man should keep what he has earned by his own labor, it seems to follow that it is unjust that he should have everything not earned by his labor.

Whether the bare doctrine of equality is not of necessity unjust, it is quite impossible to determine, for the reason that the bare doctrine of equality has no substance. Certainly Mr. Stephen is not felicitous in the choice of examples. In the matter of property, his reasoning is vitiated by a very apparent fallacy. Admitting that a man has a right to all that he has fairly earned, he nevertheless intimates that it would not be unjust to deny him the right to dispose of it in his own way when the hour for parting comes. Perhaps not; not having settled the question of what justice is, Mr. Stephen is not in a position to decide what would be just and what unjust. But one thing is clear: the man who cannot do with his property what he pleases cannot be properly said to be possessed of the right to control it. Those who justify the claim to private property are far from prescribing, arbitrarily, the limitation involved in Mr. Stephen's statement. A man has a right, we say, not merely to that which he has fairly *earned*, but to all that he has fairly come into possession of, gift, inheritance, and speculative gains not excepted. As to the example of taxation, there is *no* just method of distributing it under the compulsory system. Compulsory taxation is plainly robbery, and ethical writers can scarcely be interested in the methods of successful plunder. Under free competition, under voluntary protection, supply and demand would regulate the price of protection, and the just method would be the method arrived at by the agents operating in the open market. But, of course, we cannot expect Mr. Stephen either to confirm or contradict our proposition with regard to the ethical character of taxation, since he is without any criterion or test, having no definition of justice. We must, therefore, follow him into another important division of the subject, and endeavor to gather from what he says about the true relation between justice and equality what his notion of justice is.

> A judge, to take the typical case, is perfectly just when he ascertains the facts by logical inferences from the evidence and then applies the law in the spirit of a scientific reasoner. Given the facts, what is the rule under which they come? To answer that question, generally speaking, is his whole duty. In other words, he has to exclude all irrelevant considerations, such as his own private interests or affections. The parties are to him merely A and B, and he has to work out the result as an arithmetician works out a sum. Among the irrelevant considerations are frequently some moral aspects of the case. A judge, for example, decides a will to be valid or invalid without asking whether the testator acted justly or unjustly in a moral sense, but simply whether his action was legal or illegal. He cannot go behind the law, even from motives of benevolence or general maxims of justice, without being an unjust judge. . . . Justice implies essentially indifference to irrelevant considerations, and therefore, in many cases, equality in the treatment of the persons concerned. A judge has to decide without reference to bribes and not be biassed by the position of an accused person. In that sense he treats the men equally, but of course he does not give equal treatment to the criminal and innocent, to the rightful and wrongful claimant.
>
> The equality implied in justice is therefore to be understood as an exclusion of the irrelevant, and thus supposes an understanding as to what is irrelevant. It is not a mere abstract assertion of equality, but the assertion that, in a given concrete case, a certain rule is to be applied without considering anything outside of the rule. An ideally perfect rule would contain within itself a sufficient indication of what is to be relevant. All men of full age, sound mind, and so forth, are to be treated in such and such a way. Then all cases falling within the rule are to be decided on the same principles, and in that sense equally. But the problem remains, what considerations should be taken into account by the rule itself? Let us put the canon of equality in a different shape, namely, that there should always be a sufficient reason for any difference in the treatment of our fellows. This rule does not imply that I should act in all cases as though all men were equal in character or mind, but that my action should in all cases be justified by some appropriate consideration. It does not prove that every man should have a vote, but that, if one man has a vote and another has not, there should be some adequate reason for the difference. It does not prove that every man should work eight hours a day and have a shilling an hour, but that differences of hours or of pay and, equally, uniformity of hours and pay should have some sufficient justification. This is a deeper principle which in some cases justifies and in others does not justify the rule of equality. The rule of equality follows from it under certain conditions and has gained credit because, in point of fact, those conditions have often been satisfied.

It should be stated at once that, so far as the problem of equality is concerned, the above solution is entirely satisfactory. The bare doctrine of equality is wholly ignored, and we are told, in effect, that socially all men are to be treated in a certain way and in accordance with a certain rule: they are to be equal in the sense that they are to be treated after the same principle, and that any inequality must be justified by a sufficient reason, and must not violate the general rule. But what is that general rule? Surely in the absence of that rule it is utterly impossible to say what is sufficient or insufficient as a reason for inequality. The judge has the law to refer his case to; his general rule is supposed to be laid down for his guidance; and he pronounces men innocent or guilty in obedience to that rule. The legislator furnishes rules to the judge; but what is to guide the legislator? He, too, must treat all men equally (in the sense of following one general rule, deviations to be justified by sufficient reasons); and what is that equality to mean and consist in? The answer of the individualists to this, Mr. Stephen conceives to be as follows:

> The school of so-called individualists finds, in fact, that equality in their sense is incompatible with the varied differences due to the complete growth of the social structure. They look upon men simply as so many independent units of varying qualities, no doubt, but still capable of being considered for political and social purposes as equal. They ask virtually what justice would demand, if we had before us a crowd of independent applicants for the good things of the world, and the simplest answer is to distribute the good things equally. If it is replied that the idle and the industrious should not be upon the same footing, they are ready to agree, perhaps, that men should be rewarded according to services to society, however difficult it may be to arrange the proportions. But it soon appears that the various classes into which society is actually divided imply differences, not due to the individual and his intrinsic merits, but to the varying surroundings in which he is placed. To do justice, then, it becomes necessary to get rid of these differences.

This, however, is too vague. The general rule insisted on by the individualists is the principle of equal liberty, which implies equality of opportunity in the exploitation of nature's raw material. The equality implied by justice is this equality of liberty and opportunity. This rule may not be "ideally perfect," but it does "contain within itself a sufficient indication of what is to be relevant." A man should have the right to be and do and possess anything that he may be, do, or possess consistently with the like claims of others. If this equality is guaranteed, justice is satisfied. Against any inequality due to nature it is irrational and useless to protest. But the man who disturbs the social harmony and deliberately de-

stroys the equality of liberty without sufficient reason renders himself liable to a loss of liberty and equality in his turn, and it becomes proper, — a sufficient reason exists, — for society to adopt any measure calculated to restore equilibrium (if that be within possibility), or, at all events, to guard against the recurrence of the evil. V. Y.

Free Trade in Banking.

To the Editor of Liberty:

It is much to be regretted when Liberty is wounded in the house of her friends. This is caused by those who regard liberty as a panacea for every ill, or perhaps it would be better to say who regard the inevitable vicissitudes and inequalities of life as evil. There is no more philosophical reason for believing that all men can be equal, rich, and happy than for believing that all animals can be equal, including, of course, that they should all be equal to men.

Freedom is exceeding fair. It is by far the most excellent way. Under liberty the very best possible results in every department of human activity, including commerce, will be obtained. But it won't make fools successful. One of its recommendations is that folly will more surely be remedied by getting its medicine than by the grandmotherly plan of protection in all directions. In many cases cure is better than prevention. Little burns, we may be sure, save many lives. (1)

It seems to be a fashion nowadays amongst reformers to rail at our existing systems of currency and to regard government interference here as greater and more pernicious than in many other matters. The truth, however, is that there is scarcely anything which more completely illustrates the powerlessness of government to establish code in opposition to custom than the unvarying failure of unsound currency enactments, and the concomitant dwindling of monetary law into a mere specification of truisms, a registration of established practice, or a system of licensing certain individuals to carry on certain kinds of trade. But all these are evils not peculiar to the money trade, nor do they here produce more injurious results than in the cases of priests, doctors, accountants, lawyers, engineers, and other privileged faculties. (2)

Schemes to bring about the abolition of interest, especially when the authors promulgate this as a necessary consequence of free trade in banking, are pernicious, and in their ultimate effect reactionary. Low rates of interest depend upon the magnitude of the mass of capital competing for investment rather than upon the presence or absence of the really trifling interference of governments with the modes in which debt may be incurred. What is called free trade in banking actually means only unlimited liberty to create debt. It is the erroneous labelling of debt as money which begets most of the fallacies of currency-faddists, both coercionary and liberationist. (3)

The principal error of the former is that they advocate schemes for the growth and preferential marketing of government debt. The *ignis fatuus* of some of the latter is a vision of people both using their property and pledging it at the same time; (4) while some go so far as to dream of symbolical money of indefinite value. Thus we have Mr. Alfred B. Westrup contributing "Citizens' Money" and "The Financial Problem," both of which tacitly attempt to expound a method to enable everyone to get into debt and keep there. (5)

The introduction to the first-named essay seems by implication to assert that the price of gold is too high, though no attempt is made to show how displacing it from currency would reduce the price as long as its cost and utility remain what they now are; while the author himself appears to think that money can be made very much more plentiful and yet maintain its value, although he is contending that this value depends upon monopoly or scarcity. The last-named essay plainly assumes that by some such scheme poverty can be abolished. (6)

Banking is not the only financial operation in which government interferes. In the case of insurance companies, benefit societies, limited liability corporations, partnerships, trusts, insolvencies, and hundreds of other ways government is continually interfering. Most of this interference is well-meant. Most, if not all, of it is actually injurious in itself, apart from the waste, the jobbery, and the imbecility of officialism it involves. These concomitant evils, though far greater than those directly resulting from the interference, had better for the time being be left out of sight. Their treatment belongs to the general subject of liberty, and they only incidentally pertain to the financial interference of government, as they do to all its other interference. Ignoring then the saving in cost, the immediate effect of the total abstention of government from its protection of the public from financial folly and roguery would be that a great crop of fresh schemes, bargains, and arrangements would offer themselves to those desirous of entrusting any of their wealth to the management of others. A very large proportion of these schemes — possibly the majority — would be unsound. (7) Amongst the unsound, unless its expounders grievously misrepresent it, would undoubtedly be found such mutual banking as is proposed by Mr. Westrup. He is altogether on a wrong tack. His whole talk is about money, but this term in his mouth means indebtedness, trust, credit, paper instruments binding someone to deliver something. Now, credit is not a representative of wealth, as Mr. Westrup so constantly declares. Mr. Westrup's money is a representative of a promise or debt. It may in many cases, as a matter of history, show that A has entrusted certain wealth to B; but it does not guarantee that B has preserved it, and still less does it assure the holder that B can at call deliver or replace the borrowed articles, or any equal number of similar articles, or an equivalent value in some other articles. (8) As Mr. Louisthorpe insists in his "Principles of Plutology" (p. 136): "There is [at each moment] a certain amount of every valuable commodity in existence, neither more nor less; nor can it be increased by a single atom though the whole population suddenly, as if by inspiration, began craving and yearning for it." (9) Again, what is there to show that any necessity exists, as Mr. Westrup asserts, for enabling all wealth to be represented by money? If I give a man a loaf for sweeping my door step, the loaf does not represent the work, nor does the work represent the loaf. All we know is that I desire the sweeping more than I desire the loaf, and the laborer desires the loaf more than his ease or idleness. If I give a guinea for a hat, this guinea does not represent the particular hat or any hat. It does not represent it while in my possession before the exchange, nor in the hatter's possession after the exchange. Gold is valuable; it does not merely represent value. The value represents an estimate of the comparative labor necessary to produce the last increment needful to replenish the stock of gold at a rate equivalent to its consumption, — this consumption depending upon the comparative utility of gold in relation to its own value and that of other commodities. Or at a given hat shop it represents an estimate of the cost of bringing as much more gold to the place as equivalent to the cost of bringing another hat to the shop. (10)

Mr. Westrup's fallacious analysis of commerce dogs his steps in every process of his reasoning. The gravest evils of the interference of government in monetary matters are little more than its cost and the deadening influence of fancied protection. The reform which monetary liberty would secure would not include any redistribution of the products of labor. This depends partly upon the possibility of the laborer possessing the skill of a speculator and of a producer and exercising both at the same time, and partly upon the enormously disproportionate share of taxation which he has to bear. These and many other evils, in so far as they are increased by government, depend not upon arbitrary money, but upon the arbitrary alienation of the substance of the citizen. It is a most trivial incident that the plunder is nominally priced in and redeemed by one commodity. The evil is that it should be taken. The form makes but an infinitesimal difference.

Mr. Westrup would do well to ask himself these questions, and, in answering them, to assign the grounds upon which he proceeds in arriving at the conclusions. (11)

1. Would the value of gold be (*a*) increased (*b*) reduced by mutual banking? And what percentage?

2. Is gold the only commodity produced and bought by people who don't want to consume it?

3. Would gold lose its preeminence as the commodity the value of which is most correctly estimated, and which it is therefore safest to buy at market value when disposing of our own or our purchased produce?

4. What has the rate of interest to do with the net or residual increment of wealth remaining as a surplus after maintaining the population? Is this less in the United Kingdom where interest is low than in the United States where interest is high?

5. How could legislation maintain the value of gold if it became as abundant as copper? Would the volume of money then be greater than now? Would the rate of interest be affected by this alteration apart from the changes due to the act of transition from the present state of dear gold to the supposed state of cheap gold?

6. How is the voluntary custom of selling preferentially for gold a monopoly? Are cattle a monopoly where used as a medium of exchange?

7. What analogy is there between a law to require the exclusive consumption of hand-made bricks and any laws specifying that the word Dollar in a bond shall imply a certain quantity of gold? Does any government force anyone to consume gold in preference to any other commodity? Does government consume gold in constructing its offices and defences, or does it merely swap it off for other commodities? Is all silver or gold in the United States delivered to government as fast as made, or does government purchase it in the open market?

Yours, etc.,

J. Greevz Fisher.

78 Harrowgate Road, Leeds, England.

Pending the arrival of any answer Mr. Westrup may desire to make to the foregoing criticisms upon his pamphlets, for which purpose the columns of Liberty are open to him, I take the liberty of offering some comments as well as answers to Mr. Fisher's questions.

(1) I know of no friend of liberty who regards it as a panacea for every ill, or claims that it will make fools successful, or believes that it will make all men equal, rich, and perfectly happy. The Anarchists, it is true, believe that under liberty the laborer's wages will buy back his product, and that this will make men more nearly equal, will insure the industrious and the prudent against poverty, and will add to human happiness. But between the fictitious claims which Mr. Fisher scouts and the real claims which the Anarchists assert it is easy to see the vast difference.

(2) I do not understand how "the unvarying failure of unsound currency enactments" makes the interference of government with finance seem less pernicious. In fact, it drives me to precisely the opposite conclusion. In the phrase, "concomitant dwindling of monetary law into a mere specification of truisms," Mr. Fisher repeats his attempt, of which I complained in the last issue of Liberty, to belittle the restrictions placed upon the issue of paper money. When he has answered the question which I have asked him regarding the English banking laws, we can discuss the matter more intelligently. Meanwhile it is futile to try to make a monopoly seem less than a monopoly by resorting to such a circumlocution as "system of licensing individuals to carry on certain kinds of trades." or to claim that the monopoly of a tool not only common but indispensable to all trades is not more injurious than the monopoly of a tool used by only one trade or a few trades.

(3) It is true that if the mass of capital competing for investment were increased, the rate of interest would fall. But it is not true that scarcity of capital is the only factor that keeps up the rate of interest. If I were free to use my capital directly as a basis of credit or currency, the relief from the necessity of borrowing additional capital from others would decrease the borrowing demand and therefore the rate of interest. And if, as the Anarchists claim, this freedom to use capital as a basis of credit should give an immense impetus to business, and consequently cause an immense demand for labor, and consequently increase productive power, and consequently augment the amount of capital, here another force would be exercised to lower the rate of interest and cause it to gradually vanish. Free trade in banking does not mean *only* unlimited liberty to create debt; it means also vastly increased ability to meet debt: and, so accompanied, the liberty to create debt is one of the greatest blessings. It is not erroneous to label evidence of debt as money. As Col. Wm. B. Greene well said: "That is money which does the work of the tool money." When evidence of debt circulates as a medium of exchange, to all intents and purposes it is money. But this is of small consequence. The Anarchists do not insist on the word "money." Suppose we call such evidence of debt *currency* (and surely it is currency), what then? How does this change of name affect the conclusions of the "currency-faddists"? Not in the least, as far as I can see. By the way, it is not becoming in a man who has, not simply one bee in his bonnet, but a whole swarm of them, to talk flippantly of the "fads" of men whose lives afford unquestionable evidence of their earnestness.

(4) Mr. Fisher seems to think it inherently impossible to use one's property and at the same time pledge it. But what else happens when a man, after mortgaging his house, continues to live in it? This is an actual every-day occurrence, and mutual banking only seeks to make it possible on easier terms, — the terms that will prevail under competition instead of the terms that do prevail under monopoly. The man who calls this reality an *ignis fatuus* must be either impudent or ignorant. Unfortunately it is true that some believers in mutual banking do "dream of symbolical money of indefinite value," but none of the standard expositions of the subject offer any such fallacy, and it is with these that Mr. Fisher must deal if he desires to overthrow the mutual banking idea.

(5) Mr. Westrup's method, if I understand it, would not "enable every one to get into debt and

keep there," but rather to get into debt and out again, greatly to the advantage of the borrower and of society generally. Mr. Westrup does not contemplate the issue of bank-notes against individual notes that never mature.

(6) Mr. Fisher, in his remark that "no attempt is made to show how displacing gold from currency would reduce the price as long as its cost and utility remain what they now are," is no less absurd than he would be if he were to say that no attempt is made to show how displacing flour as an ingredient of bread would reduce the price of flour as long as its cost and utility remain what they now are. The utility of flour consists in the fact that it is an ingredient of bread, and the main utility of gold consists in the fact that it is used as currency. To talk of displacing these utilities and at the same time keeping them what they now are is a contradiction in terms, of which Mr. Fisher is guilty. But Mr. Westrup is guilty of no contradiction at all in claiming that money can be made very much more plentiful and yet maintain its value at the same time that he contends that the present value of money is due to its monopoly or scarcity. For, to quote Colonel Greene again:

> All money is not the same money. There is one money of gold, another of brass, another of leather, and another of paper; and there is a difference in the glory of these different kinds of money. There is one money that is a commodity, having its exchangeable value determined by the law of supply and demand, which money may be called (though somewhat barbarously) *merchandise-money*; as, for instance, gold, silver, brass, bank-bills, etc.: there is another money, which is not a commodity, whose exchangeable value is altogether independent of the law of supply and demand, and which may be called *mutual money*. . . . . If ordinary bank-bills represented specie actually existing in the vaults of the banks, no mere issue or withdrawal of them could effect a fall or rise in the value of money: for every issue of a dollar-bill would correspond to the locking-up of a specie dollar in the banks' vaults; and every cancelling of a dollar bill would correspond to the issue by the banks of a specie dollar. It is by the exercize of *banking privileges* — that is, by the issue of bills purporting to be, but which are not, convertible — that the banks effect a depreciation in the price of the silver dollar. It is this FICTION (by which legal value is assimilated to, and becomes, to all business intents and purposes, actual value) that enables bank-notes to depreciate the silver dollar. *Substitute* VERITY *in the place of fiction*, either by permitting the banks to issue no more paper than they have specie in their vaults, or by effecting an entire divorce between bank-paper and its pretended specie basis, and the power of paper to depreciate specie is at an end. So long as the fiction is kept up, the silver dollar is depreciated, and tends to emigrate for the purpose of travelling in foreign parts; but, the moment the fiction is destroyed, the power of paper over metal ceases. By its intrinsic nature specie is merchandise, having its value determined, as such, by supply and demand; but, on the contrary, paper-money is, by its intrinsic nature, *not* merchandise, but the means whereby merchandise is exchanged, and, as such, ought always to be commensurate in quantity with the amount of merchandise to be exchanged, be that amount great or small. MUTUAL MONEY IS MEASURED BY SPECIE, BUT IS IN NO WAY ASSIMILATED TO IT; AND THEREFORE ITS ISSUE CAN HAVE NO EFFECT WHATEVER TO CAUSE A RISE OR FALL IN THE PRICE OF THE PRECIOUS METALS.

This is one of the most important truths in finance and perfectly accounts for Mr. Westrup's position. When he says that money can be made very much more plentiful and yet maintain its value, he is speaking of *mutual money*; when he says that the present value of money depends upon monopoly or scarcity, he is speaking of *merchandise-money*.

(7) As sensibly might one say to Mr. Fisher, who is a stanch opponent of government postal service, that "the immediate effect of the total abstention of government from its protection of the public from the roguery of private mail-carriers would be that a great crop of fresh schemes would offer themselves to those desirous of entrusting any of their letters to others to carry. A very large proportion of these schemes — possibly the majority — would be unsound." Well, what of it? Are we on this account to give up freedom? No, says Mr. Fisher. But then, what is the force of the consideration?

(8) Mr. Westrup's money not only shows that A has given B a conditional title to certain wealth, but guarantees that this wealth has been preserved. That is, it affords a guarantee so nearly perfect that it is acceptable. If you take a mortgage on a house and the owner insures it in your favor, the guarantee against loss by fire is not perfect, since the insurance company may fail, but it is good enough for practical purposes. Similarly, if B, the bank, advances money to A against a mortgage on the latter's stock of goods, it is within the bounds of possibility that A will sell the goods and disappear forever, but he will thus run the risk of severe penalties; and these penalties, coupled with B's caution, make a guarantee that practically serves. To be sure, Mr. Westrup's money does not assure the holder that the bank will deliver the borrowed articles on demand, but it does assure him that he can get similar articles or their equivalents on demand from any customers of the bank that have them for sale, because all these customers are pledged to take the bank's notes; to say nothing of the fact that the bank, though not bound to redeem on demand, is bound to redeem as fast as the mortgage notes mature.

(9) I perceive the perfect truth of Mr. Donisthorpe's remark, but I do not perceive its pertinence to the matter under discussion.

(10) Nor do I detect the bearing of the truisms which Mr. Fisher enunciates so solemnly. They certainly do not establish the absence of any necessity for enabling all wealth to be represented by money. This necessity is shown by the fact that, when the monetary privilege is conferred upon one form of wealth exclusively, the people have to obtain this form of wealth at rates that sooner or later send them into bankruptcy.

(11) I conclude by answering Mr. Fisher's questions.

The value of gold would be reduced by mutual banking, because it would thereby be stripped of that exclusive monetary utility conferred upon it by the State. The percentage of this reduction no one can tell in advance, any more than he can tell how much whiskey would fall in price if there were unrestricted competition in the sale of it.

Neither gold nor any other commodity is bought by people who don't want to consume it or in some way cause others to consume it. Gold is in process of consumption when it is in use as currency.

Mutual banking might or might not cause gold to lose its preeminence as the most thoroughly constituted value. If it should do so, then some other commodity more constantly demanded and uniformly supplied would take the place of gold as a standard of value. It certainly is unscientific to impart a factitious, monopoly value to a commodity in order to make its value steady.

Other things being equal, the rate of interest is inversely proportional to the residual increment of wealth, for the reason that a low rate of interest (except when offered to an already bankrupted people) makes business active, causes a more universal employment of labor, and thereby adds to productive capacity. The residual increment is less in the United Kingdom where interest is low than in the United States where interest is high, because other things are not equal. But in either country this increment would be greater than it now is, if the rate of interest were to fall.

If gold became as abundant as copper, legislation, if it chose, could maintain its value by decreeing that we should drink only from gold goblets. If the value were maintained, the volume of money would be greater on account of the abundance of gold. This increase of volume would lower the rate of interest.

A *voluntary* custom of selling preferentially for gold would not be a monopoly, but there is no such voluntary custom. Where cattle are used voluntarily as a medium of exchange, they are not a monopoly; but where there is a law that *only* cattle shall be so used, they are a monopoly.

It is not incumbent on Anarchists to show an analogy between a law to require the exclusive consumption of hand-made bricks and any law specifying that the word Dollar in a bond shall imply a certain quantity of gold. But they are bound and ready to show an analogy between the first-named law and any laws prohibiting or taxing the issue of notes, of whatever description, intended for circulation as currency. Governments force people to consume gold, in the sense that they give people no alternative but that of abandoning the use of money. When government swaps off gold for other commodities, it thereby consumes it in the economic sense. The United States government purchases its gold and silver. It can hardly be said, however, that it purchases silver in an open market, because, being obliged by law to buy so many millions each month, it thereby creates an artificial market.

T.

Is This Our Critic, My Lord?

The late and unlamented Denver "Individualist" gloried in a contributor whose paragraphic exercises were especially distinguished by their incoherence and puerility. His capacity for misreading, misunderstanding, and misrepresenting things was truly phenomenal. "T" was his signature. Now there is strong circumstantial evidence to support the theory I have formed that Mr. Francis D. Tandy, of Denver, the now famous author of the treatise on "Biology and Sociology," which the "Twentieth Century" has been fortunate enough to give to the grateful world, is no other personage than our old and honored acquaintance "T" of the Denver "Individualist." The unassuming and modest "T" has in the natural course of things evoluted into the imposing and respectable Francis D. Tandy (such is my working hypothesis); and I am glad to note that there has been corresponding progress in the proportions and composition of the deliverances proceeding from what our old acquaintance would doubtless dignify by calling his mind. Short paragraphs have been superseded by somewhat lengthy effusions, and simple subjects have given place to intricate and complex problems. The results of the application of the aforesaid marvellous capacity for misapprehension and misreading to such problems may be imagined.

Referring to the famous and epoch-making utterance on "Biology and Sociology," we find that the author therein attempted "to prove" three statements. The first is that biology bears a very important relation to sociology. This is indeed a great and pregnant truth, and Mr. Tandy is to be congratulated on his discernment. It matters not that this truth has been fully appreciated and emphasized by every competent writer since Comte: the point is that Mr. Tandy discovered the fact for himself, without the assistance of other great thinkers. Having independently discovered it, Mr. Tandy quite naturally wishes to "prove" it independently and in his own way. It is true of course that what Mr. Tandy attempts to prove is so well established that no intelligent man doubts it. But it is to be remembered that there are many unintelligent men in the world, and Mr. Tandy's efforts to prove the existence of a very important relation between biology and sociology to those who, like him, have no familiarity with either science, if rather unprofitable, are at least prompted by humanitarian sentiment.

The second statement is "that the theory of use-inheritance, held by Darwin and Spencer, has been overthrown, and has hitherto been practically ignored in sociological discussions." Now let no frivolous individual interpose here the idle quibble that in what Mr. Tandy describes as the second statement are contained two distinct statements, — namely, first, that the theory of use-inheritance has been overthrown, and, second, that this theory has been ignored in sociological discussions. The question is as to the truth, not the number, of the statements, Mr. Tandy will sharply remind him. Well, the statement that the theory of use inheritance has been overthrown is an ignorant and absurd one. It has not been overthrown, and is not likely to be easily overthrown, as everybody who is conversant with the nature of the evidence for and against it is satisfied. As to the alleged failure of sociological writers to refer to use-inheritance, it is simply not true that those who believe in it have ignored it. And of course no man of sense would expect those who doubt it and are endeavoring to disprove it to trouble themselves about its sociological implications. Mr. Tandy reveals his ignorance and incompetence in the most striking manner in the following tissue of reckless falsehoods:

Spencer is a stanch advocate of natural selection, a theory which is materially strengthened by the overthrow of "use-inheritance," and it is from this biological law that he has derived his sociological ideas, ignoring the question of "use-inheritance" altogether in relation to sociology. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that Spencer should arrive at many correct sociological ideas, in spite of an error in biology, which he never applied to the former science. Had he built entirely on the use-inheritance doctrine, ignoring the theory of natural selection, and had still arrived at the same conclusions, Mr. Tucker might have had some cause for astonishment.

Those who understand Spencer's sociology know that he *has* built largely on the use-inheritance doctrine, and they will dismiss the man who, claiming to have studied Spencer, nevertheless asserts that the question of use-inheritance in relation to sociology is ignored altogether in Spencer's sociological writings, as a fool. Fortunately there is evidence on the subject of a more direct kind, and the reader will be able to judge Mr. Tandy without undertaking an exhaustive examination of Spencer's sociology. Here is what Spencer writes in his preface to "The Factors of Organic Evolution," a book chiefly devoted to the demonstration of the use-inheritance doctine:

Though the direct bearings of the arguments contained in this Essay are biological, the argument contained in its first half has indirect bearings upon Psychology, Ethics, and Sociology. My belief in the profound importance of these indirect bearings was originally a chief prompter to set forth the argument; and it now prompts me to re-issue it in permanent form.

Though mental phenomena of many kinds, and especially of the simpler kinds, are explicable only as resulting from the natural selection of favorable variations; yet there are, I believe, still more numerous mental phenomena, including all those of any considerable complexity, which cannot be explained otherwise than as results of the inheritance of functionally-produced modifications. What theory of psychological evolution is espoused, thus depends on acceptance or rejection of the doctrine that not only in the individual, but in the successions of individuals, use and disuse of parts produce respectively increase and decrease of them.

Of course there are involved the conceptions we form of the genesis and nature of our higher emotions; and, by implication, the conceptions we form of our moral intuitions. If functionally-produced modifications are inheritable, then the mental associations habitually produced in individuals by experiences of the relations between actions and their consequences, pleasurable or painful, may, in the successions of individuals, generate innate tendencies to like or dislike such actions. But if not, the genesis of such tendencies is, as we shall see, not satisfactorily explicable.

That our sociological beliefs must also be profoundly affected by the conclusions we draw on this point, is obvious. If a nation is modified *en masse* by transmission of the effects produced on the natures of its members by those modes of daily activity which its institutions and circumstances involve; then we must infer that such institutions and circumstances mould its members far more rapidly and comprehensively than they can do if the sole cause of adaptation to them is the more frequent survival of individuals who happen to have varied in favorable ways.

The third statement is that the overthrow of the use-inheritance doctrine strengthens the individualist position. Again, those who understand Spencerian sociology know that the reverse of this is true. Spencer's theory of social evolution and the conclusion that Anarchism is the ideal condition which humanity is destined to reach are closely related to the doctrine of use-inheritance, are in fact largely based on it. The overthrow of the doctrine would materially strengthen State Socialism, as is evidenced by the position of Wallace, who succeeds in reconciling his belief in evolution (considering as he does natural and sexual selection as the only factors) with Bellamyism.

And the author of all these "statements" has the impudence to sneer at those who discuss the relation between intellectual property and the principle of equal liberty! It is reprehensible to discuss the corollaries of equal liberty because certain vital problems in biology are not yet settled! Only a man with encyclopedic ignorance and no logical faculty can make such a spectacle of himself. V. Y.

I have just published a translation from the German of Karl Heinzen's work on "The Rights of Women and the Sexual Relations." It treats the subject of marriage in a very bold and outspoken fashion, and, on the whole, very radically. The translation is the work of Emma Heller Schumm, whose articles have often added to the power and interest of these columns; and to Karl Schmemann, of Detroit, belongs the credit of taking the initiative in this publication and assuming the financial risk thereof. In thus laying the works of Heinzen before the English-reading world, Mr. Schmemann and Mrs. Schumm are carrying out one of the dearest wishes of the stanch old German radical, and contributing a stone to an even worthier monument than that erected in the cemetery where his remains lie buried. For it they will doubtless receive the unanimous and hearty thanks of Heinzen's true friends and real admirers. I will send the book, post-paid, on receipt of the price, which is fifty cents for paper copies and one dollar for copies bound in cloth. It has nearly two hundred pages. I commend to all Anarchists this work by a man whose writings ever breathed the Anarchistic spirit, and who, were he now living, would surely be working with the Anarchists for the realization of their aims.

Plumb-Line Pointers.

Sometime ago A. E. Wild said in the "Twentieth Century": "It [Anarchism] can only be an evolution from Socialism, *which is the foundation of Anarchism.*" Italics are mine. In the sense that every increase of liberty is the fruit of a *revolt* against a pre-existing tyranny, and in this sense alone, is Anarchism the child of State Socialism. Socialism is the foundation of Anarchism just as the Church is the foundation of Freethought. In each instance the heat of suffering and the light of intelligence have planted in the muck-heap of despotism a germ which has developed into a sturdy tree of liberty, destined to ultimately absorb, purify, and assimilate the entire mass of putrescence and to transform what was deadly poison into healthful, nourishing food for all of earth's millions. Philosophically speaking, Anarchism is the foundation of real Socialism, for only wher there is freedom (Anarchism) can there be a true society. Normal social life is a thing of attraction, not of compression. Hence no number of units which are pinned together by bayonets can properly be called society. It is a combination, not a union.

The New York "Herald" has this in its local news columns:

Mary and Michael Downs, of No. 121 Ninth avenue, and their three children were before Justice McMahon at the Jefferson Market Police Court. The three children were arrested Saturday night by Agent Schultes, of Mr. Gerry's society. Schultes told the Justice that their parents were habitual drunkards, and that the little ones were totally neglected and allowed to run in the streets at all hours of the day and night. According to Schultes, Mr. and Mrs. Downs are old offenders, their children having once before been taken from them and committed to an institution through the efforts of the society. The three tear stained children had a very different story to tell. They denied that their parents were drunkards, or that they themselves were neglected, and begged piteously to be allowed to go home. They were exceptionally clean and unusually well dressed for children of poor people. Nevertheless they were committed to the care of the society. Their grief at being separated from their mother was frantic, and they were literally torn from her arms by the agents of the society.

Robert Harrison, of No. 223 East Twenty-eighth street, was arraigned on the charge of interfering with the arrest of the children. Agent Schultes testified that, after taking the children in charge, the entire party, which included another agent of the society, boarded a Twenty-third street car. Harrison was a passenger. He displayed a keen interest in the crying children and demanded to know why they had been arrested, and then said that he would follow the party and see what was done with the children. When the rooms of the society were reached, he attempted to force in the door, which had been closed against him, and was arrested.

Harrison's story was that he saw the two agents in charge of the children who were weeping bitterly. He naturally asked for an explanation, which was denied. When he attempted to follow the party into the Twenty-third street house, he was badly beaten by Schultes and then arrested. He was fined $10.

Granting the accuracy of the "Herald's" report, does it require any abnormal keenness of perception to determine who told the truth in regard to the home treatment of the children, the children themselves or the agents of the society? It was not to be expected that a police judge would regard the wishes of the children, while the kind-hearted Mr. Harrison has paid ten dollars for the lesson that a justice-loving citizen has no chance when playing with the loaded dice of a society licensed to prove the necessity for its own existence by the number of arrests it makes and the sum of fines it succeeds in getting imposed upon inquirers.

The New York "World" remarks that "an outraged wife, arrested for cowhiding a young woman who had alienated her husband's affections, was discharged by a jury whose sense of justice was stronger than its belief in the law." The "World" seems to be somewhat hazy in its views regarding the law. Is it not a fact that the law regards the husband and wife as the exclusive owners of each other? Did they not by the act or declaration of marriage alienate their individual right of choice? Thereafter they did not possess the right to bestow their affections upon another person or other persons. So the law looks upon the alienation of the affections of a husband or wife by another woman or man as *theft* — theft just as much as though a purse or a horse had been taken without the consent of the owners. In this case there was only a technical violation of the law when the wife whipped the young woman for stealing her chattel, her husband, who, in the eyes of the law, was no more an active factor than a purse or a horse. The man whose pocketbook is taken by a thief captures him, if he can, without asking the law's consent; the farmer whose horse is stolen gets after the thief with a vigilance committee; and in each case the law winks at the extra-judicial proceedings, just as this jury did at the extra-judicial action of the wife. So far as their post-marriage right of choice is concerned, the husband and wife are in the same category with pocketbooks and horses. They are chattels, in the eyes of the law, and are so estimated by public opinion. This jury had no intelligent conception of justice; all it knew was that the husband was the property of the wife, that the young woman had stolen the said piece of property from the wife, and that the wife had punished the thief. Consequently, in perfect harmony with the *spirit* of the law, it acquitted the wife. So other juries, reasoning in precisely the same way, acquit men who deliberately murder the lovers of their wives. In no other field of human thought, emotion, and activity are the actions of men and women governed by superstitions so childish, idiotic, gross, indecent, cruel as in the domain of sexuality. The "World's" wonderfully wise jury is a fit successor to the tribunals which sentenced old women to be burned to death because it was "proved" that they had ridden through the air astride of broomsticks.

John Stuart Mill casually remarks that "it would be desirable that the State should take insurance business into its own hands." Was not Mr. Mill aware that the State had always made a pretence of insuring the property and life of the subject, and that it had ever made a lamentable failure of the attempt, or the pretence of an attempt? Is not taxation a premium paid for the policy of compulsory insurance issued by the Great Mutual Government Assurance Company (Limited)?

London has 40,000 young seamstresses under twenty, who come from the country, live in homes for working girls, and, with their utmost efforts, can only earn $1.12 a week. The London "Daily News" has undertaken the hopeless task of benefiting their condition. — *New York World.*

America has hundreds of thousands of the same class, who, in proportion to the cost of living here, are no better paid. So long as present industrial and financial systems persist, the numbers of these half-living workers will increase rather than diminish. In face of this awful disparity between work and wages, between the needs of working women and that which our government-monopoly cursed society gives them, how foolish and futile appear the child's play "reforms" of the increase-the-age-of-consent and moral purity people! So long as women are inadequately remunerated for useful work, so long will the ranks of prostitution be filled to overflowing, even though you make the age of consent thirty years and preach the crucifixion of love until the grave seals your lips. It is time that the truth were unflinchingly told. *Under existing economic conditions* the childless prostitute contributes infinitely less to the degradation of womankind than does the wife who recklessly ushers into life a large number of children.

Hereafter correspondents will please address me at Boston, Mass., care of Box 3366.

E. C. Walker.

Ideas and Land.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Assuming the law of equal liberty —

It follows that no one has a right to the exclusive control of land. Land, however, being of such a nature that it is impossible for two persons to use the same portion at the same time, there is a necessary infringement of the law, and the best we can do is to approximate to it as far as possible. Communism being out of the question and force undesirable, the occupancy and use theory seems to apply better than anything else. If each could use the same land at the same time, the first to use would have no right to exclude.

Assuming the law of equal liberty —

It follows that no one has a right to the exclusive control of ideas. Ideas are of such a nature that it is possible for any number of persons to use the same ideas at the same time without preventing other persons from doing likewise. If it were impossible for two to use the same idea at the same time, the first to discover and use would have the better right to it.

When land is held in common and the products divided, the same land is not worked at the same time by the same parties, it being, of course, impossible for more than one to work a particular portion of land at the one time. But any number of persons may hold the same ideas at the same time. If using different portions of land and dividing the products is communism, then using the same ideas is not communism.

George Forrest.

The Degradation of Journalism.

The Year-Book of the French Press for 1891 contains a preface contributed by Henry Maret, editor of "Le Radical." His keen criticisms of present journalistic tendencies apply in this country as well as in France, — hence I reproduce them in full.

A few years ago, when some dispute arose between the questors of the Chamber and the representatives of the Press (I believe it was a question of some door to be opened or condemned), the discussion became so bitter that very disagreeable things were said on both sides.

"Ah!" cried a deputy one day, who was not a journalist, "the Press then is a fourth power of the State?"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur," I answered him; "it is the first."

It is indeed the first, for this excellent reason, that it makes and unmakes all the others; and, if it were united, nothing could resist it. Suppose for a moment the entire Press were in the service of a single idea and a single party; I should like to know how long the great bodies could stand before it, however well constituted they may seem.

There is nothing astonishing in this; since the real name of the Press is opinion, and opinion governs the world. It is useless to rebel against a fact, and the political man who parades his contempt for the Press simply shows himself a fool, for it is exactly as though he were to defy the opinion which has placed him where he is. A private individual, a misanthrope, may disdain the newspaper: but every man who needs the public and addresses it can only bow before the public power of which the Press is the organ.

The greatest homage rendered to this force comes from the tyrants who recognize, either by suppressing it or appropriating it, the impossibility of reigning in spite of it. The day when Gutenberg placed the first sheet of paper upon the first movable type, he created a sovereignty of which all others are condemned to be no more than reflections.

To write the history of journalism in the nineteenth century would be therefore to write the history of the century itself. For it has passed through various and similar phases, transforming itself at the same time that it transformed everything around it.

The journalism of the Restoration was *doctrinaire*. Those were the days of long articles and small circulations. Just as nature, in modifying the species, leaves some specimens of each, and just as it is possible, today for instance, to discover the customs of primitive races by studying those of savages, so we should not have to search long to find in our vicinity one or two sheets which give a sufficiently exact idea of the journalism of that epoch.

Later comes the creation of the novel as a *feuilleton* and of the cheap newspaper. Girardin appeared. The journal began to be a business enterprise. Until then it had been only an expression of opinion, and had sought only to emit ideas. It began to emit shares.

Financiers, who are born shrewd, were the first to feel and understand the power of the press; consequently it has become a formidable instrument in their hands.

From the moment that they desired the journal to make money, their first thought was to make it as interesting as possible. Politics continued to maintain the first rank, but two other elements were not slow in taking a place in their turn, and soon a preponderant place, — literature and news.

There is nothing more curious than to follow this double invasion. We might draw maps of it, like those of the Roman empire nibbled at first along its frontiers, and then slowly driven back from year to year.

At first there was the *rez-de-chaussée*,* which the novelists occupied; Alexandre Dumas, Eugène Sue, carried to the highest point the power of "To be continued in our next." Beside them were installed the critics, — dramatic, musical, and literary.

While this movement was in progress, an analogous movement was going on upon the floor above in the direction of news items, which were slowly invading the territory occupied by the longer articles. Neither *chroniques* nor reports were known as yet, but *chroniqueurs* and reporters were to be born from the meeting of the two invasions from the north and from the south.

To the Second Empire we owe the outburst of the *chronique*. Politics, being no more than tolerated, had to assume smaller and smaller proportions, and conceal itself beneath the delicate allusions of light and alert pens. The *chroniqueur*, who had begun with the *salons*, and then had written humorously concerning the little incidents of social life gradually attacked larger topics. People formed the habit of reading him and nothing else.

When a little more liberty returned, the transformation was accomplished. The *chroniqueur* profited thereby, and at a single bound absorbed politics, as he had absorbed everything else. From that time there was an entirely new journalism, unique in the world, which is seen only in France where wit governs everything, and which, if the eighteenth century had known it, would have made Voltaire a chief of State. Meanwhile the writers of items were making their way. Profiting by the passage of the *chronique* to politics, they in turn took the place of the *chronique*. The public growing more and more greedy for news items, these multiplied, and reporting was born. It went everywhere, saw everything, told everything. The reports of the parliamentary sessions were followed by lobby sketches. The courts, the academies, books, and theatres became simple material for the reporter; the critic fell into the background.

Faster, ever faster. Between the newspapers there was a struggle for rapidity, as at the races. The public could no longer wait for their information, whether about little things or great. If a book appeared, they paid much less attention to its value than to the physiognomy of its author and the way in which he had written it. The bibliographical bulletin and the interview replaced the literary study. As for the theatre, there were no more *feuilletons;* they wanted to know the next day what had happened, as if it were a criminal trial. Hence improvised reports, without method, without art, reports moreover that were less read than the *Soirées* describing the actresses' costumes and their gallant *rendez-vous*. The affairs of the nation were treated with a no less free and easy fashion, and we have lately seen France threatened with a change of government by a man who was only a creature of the reporters.

At such a point we have arrived today, and contemporary journalism is descending this slope farther and farther. News-gathering has invaded everything. The man of letters, who had driven the political man from all his intrenchments, is in turn dislodged from all his own positions by the reporter; here and there he still resists, but there is a vague feeling that the living who continue will have no successors, and that a journalism is coming, in which talent will disappear, to make room for shrewdness, activity, and commercial tact.

I do not need to say that this revolution seems to me anything but progress; nevertheless, one should not yield to an exaggerated pessimism.

It is proper to view things as they are, and to understand that the public, when it buys a newspaper (for today the subscriber scarcely exists, and the newspaper is bought), is first of all guided by the desire to know what is going on. Therefore it is very natural that this need should be that which speculators hasten to satisfy: to infer therefrom the decline of letters would be a forced conclusion. Men of letters will always have places of refuge, whither those whom they interest will follow them, and the latter will always be a minority compared with those who are interested in murder cases or an account of the last moments of a prominent man.

The real danger then does not lie here, but rather in the monopoly of almost all the newspapers by the speculators, — a monopoly, moreover, which has brought about the existing situation, — and in the discredit into which the Press cannot fail to fall in consequence of this monopoly and this situation.

It is certain that this fourth power, which I called the first, and which is now at its zenith, will lose its influence more and more in proportion as curiosity shall replace consideration.

Symptoms of this are already appearing. To be curious is not to be credulous. One may buy a newspaper frequently without having the slightest confidence in it. Politically we are beginning to see the voters rebel against the press on election days. We can uncommonly witness the success of plays which the newspapers condemn, while others that are lauded to the skies are performed to empty benches. A vague impression is abroad that in all these verdicts sincerity is lacking, and that, in the absence of sincerity, there is no enlightened judgment. We are astonished to see some incapable clerk turn journalist and lord it over his fellow citizens. Circulations go on increasing; but circulations, which are a sign of material prosperity, may easily cease to be a proof of moral influence. Add to this the brutality that characterizes discussion, growing constantly coarser and more personal, and substituting insults for arguments, and you will understand readily that the press, if it does not take care, will steadily lose in authority and prestige.

Now, I do not believe that it can take care, or that anything can stop it in the path into which it has been led by the people who never hesitate to sacrifice honor to money. But here again there is no occasion to give way to exaggerated despair. In the first place, there will always remain men who will honor journalism and respect their pen; then, even if worst should come to worst, and the Press, as we understand it, should fall into utter and universal discredit, this final fall would evidently be but the signal for an immediate recovery. Publicity, as the progress of time has created it, is immortal; now, that which is immortal may pass through crises, but cannot be perpetually bad. Charlatanism attracts the crowds; but they are not slow in scattering. A day comes when, weary of stupidities and lies, they long for the truth, and, blushing at having sacrificed the splendors of the grand goddess to the unhealthy attractions of a degraded curiosity, they come back to the neglected thinkers and the abandoned writers. Never will our eyes be so full of dust that we shall not be able to find enough pure water to wash them.

For, it must be confessed, it is the public who are really guilty in this matter, if guilt there be. It has been said of peoples that they have the government which they deserve; it may be said also that they have the press which they desire. The bazaar is a very large one, and in it they sell everything. If you rush to this display of false jewels, leaving empty the neighboring shop, in which green emeralds shine in their caskets, you are hardly justified in complaining of the dishonesty of the merchants. They respond to your tastes, satisfying your desires. The press is and can be only what you wish it to be.

It is easy to say: "Such or such a journalist is a public insulter, absolutely contemptible." But, however contemptible it may be, do you believe that he would insult if his insults brought him nothing, and if they fell before your indifference? It is easy to cry out against the corruption of this one or the ignorance of that one, but why do you read them? Ask any citizen his opinion, and he will give you his theory of an ideal journal, in which political questions would be treated with a master hand, in which competent men of letters would discuss literary questions, and from which all filth and slander would be banished; he dreams of this journal, but he buys the other. Now, the first necessity is life; and all the virtues of Roland's mare became useless as soon as she was dead.

To talk of the morals of journalism then is really to talk of general morals, and we shall not correct the one until we have corrected the other. These make those; and, just as the best laws will not reform a society, so the wisest counsels in the world cannot prevent the Press from reflecting that same society. A mirror can give no other image than that of the object that is before it.

Without exaggeration, and without wishing to play the *rôle* of Luther in this new church, I think that we should be satisfied if we could achieve this: that every writer should write only what he thinks, and should respect his reader; no opinion, whatever it may be, irritates, provided it is sincere; it is only bad faith that is intolerable. Whether in politics or in art, to talk in one way and to write in another, that is the real sin against the Holy Ghost, unpardonable. And what shall we think of the man who, having attacked somebody or other, and wishing revenge, is base enough to relate concerning him things which not only are false, but which he well knows to be false?

There was formerly a rule by which honest people guided themselves; and this rule does not seem very difficult to follow. It consisted simply in writing only what one would be capable of saying. The curious thing today is to see well-bred literary men, whom nothing could induce to indulge in coarse conversation, let language flow from their pen which they would not admit on their lips.

It used to be the other way. The paper which remains was respected more than the spoken word which passes. It is true that readers of both sexes follow the same queer conduct, and I know more than one virtuous woman who would certainly be angry if anyone should say to her things which she is very ready to listen to when read aloud.

To banish falsehood and brutality from the Press, — such, for my part, is all that I could desire. The rest is a matter of taste and fashion; and one cannot expect those who are fond of farce to prefer tragedy.

At most one can platonically regret that tendencies less and less noble are becoming visible in literature, and treat as decline that which others call progress. One can also keep a smiling face, declaring that in the meantime we have a journalism which, like everything else, is *fin de siècle*.

The phrase has been the more successful because it is utterly meaningless.

* In French newspapers the bottom of the page is separated from the rest and used for the *feuilleton*. This part of the page is sometimes called the *rez-de-chaussée*, or ground-floor.

Mutualism and Its Abuses.

[Galveston News.]

The co-operative and fraternal forms of insurance are receiving a good share of criticism, especially in the east, where numerous ingenious applications of their principle have been made and some rascally bad ones. As is usual with interested parties, the principle of legal protection is appealed to, but they are not content to stop at requiring evidences of good faith and solvency. They go a step further, and propose that the people be protected against their own want of business sense. Here paternalism begins, and, as the legislature is not really paternal and wise, here serious wrong begins. Imposture and fraud take certain forms. This gives the excuse to monopolists that a sweeping prohibition or severe disabilities be imposed upon some form of business in which imposture and fraud have occurred. The legislatures in some instances do not appear to care if a monopoly be promoted by measures which look like good guardianship of the people's savings. On the other hand the fraternal orders justly claim that their principle is not responsible for the frauds that fasten upon the method. There is a great deal of unscrupulous trading of various kinds, but this has not induced the American people to relinquish their confidence in their ability in the long run to manage their own affairs. In spite of false hair and teeth and other contrivances every man has the inalienable right to take his chance of being suited in a matrimonial engage-

ment. Though some are duped, the good old rule of individual choice continues. What is wanted in all lines is simply the prevention or punishment of fraud, duplicity, and robbery in any shape, but there is no cure for errors of judgment short of destroying freedom, and man is destroyed when his freedom is destroyed. The most telling arguments that can be made against trusting wholly to assessments seem to be that a whole class will grow old together and be non-earners; that then they must fail. Whether or not this argument overlooks the probability of there being accumulations or of interest of children in later years, who will keep up assessments in order to realize the benefit, is a matter for discussion. It is a business question, and no warrant for legislation against assessment companies. An argument of some force, when duly considered, might even be made from the premise that all such practical proposals as call out the exercise of judgment are in themselves of exceeding value as educational influences. That there is a future for mutualism in various forms and far beyond life insurance and savings banks is pretty certain. Thousands have got homes on the mutual building plan, and there have been other developments of it. Society learns by fallacious experiments which are at times near to valuable truths, and in the multitude of endeavors the fit will survive.

State Socialism's Evil Possibilities.

[George E. Macdonald in Freethought.]

Mr. Slocum affirms that Spencer wilfully or ignorantly refuses to know what Nationalism is, and that he persistently misrepresents it as what it is not. Now, I have read Socialistic books and papers, listened to Socialistic orators, and conversed with professors of Socialism more or less for the past fifteen years, and it does not appear to me that Mr. Spencer has misrepresented them as to their proposed form of reconstructed society. Of course he does not agree with them about the working of the system. The central idea of Socialism is an industrial army so officered and directed as to produce the greatest results with the least amount of labor. It strikes me that such an army without officers having absolute authority would be very much like a mob. It is quite easy to draw, on the walls of the imagination, a picture of a perfect society, with men and women that have no life and consequently no volition of their own. It requires only a slight exercise of the organs of speech to say that members, actuated both by interest and pleasure, will volunteer their service; that then not to labor will be a disgrace; that under the inspiration of Nationalism emulation will take the place of competition; that labor will be wholly voluntary; that all will follow useful occupations; that fitness will determine position; that officers will be constantly changing; that the children of the highest will begin on the same round of the ladder with the lowest; and that such a thing as classes will not only be unknown but impossible. For this picture Mr. Slocum has a distinguished original to copy from; it was drawn a hundred years ago by Thomas Paine, who had as much faith in democracy as Mr. Slocum and Editor Browne have in Nationalism.

Describing America, Paine said: "There the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged." The exact opposite of this is true today. Paine goes on: "Industry is not mortified by the splendid extravagance of a court rioting at its expense." Is that so? Who paid the expenses of the presidential junketers who recently exhibited themselves from Washington to San Francisco? If industry was not mortified by the "splendid extravagance" of special trains and seventy-five dollar dinners, it is due to the fact that industry was not represented on the reception committees. "Their taxes," proceeds Paine, meaning the American people, "are few because their government is just; and as there is nothing to render them wretched, there is nothing to engender riots and tumults." At the time Paine wrote that taxes were few, the billion-dollar Congress had not met; when he said the government was just, Bennett and Heywood and Harman had not been imprisoned: the Chicago men had not been hanged. He was attacking the English monarchy, and endeavoring to show by contrast how much better it would be to have a republic. If somebody had told him that in a hundred years riots would be as frequent in America as they are in England; that Congress would be more corrupt than Parliament; that Americans would be called upon to submit to oppressions and impositions that Englishmen have thrown off; that the monarchy would hold the lead in literature, science, education, and general progress, as well as in the larger industries; that, in fact, the government which he aided in establishing would soon get to be rather worse than the one he attacked, — if somebody had hinted these things to Paine, I have no doubt he would have been as indignant as Nationalists are when told by Spencer that their system is more potent for evil than either democracy or monarchy.

Paine was the foremost political writer of his day. He was more popular than Herbert Spencer, and not open to the charge of pessimism or of hatching things in the quiet of his library. He was much in the common walks of life, and in a position to judge the signs of the times. Still he could not forecast, with the slightest degree of accuracy, the future of the republic under democracy. He never guessed how soon public office was to become a private enterprise, nor at what an early period statesmanship would be lost in politics and degraded into an unlearned profession.

It is in the line of this investigation to inquire: If the simple form of government inaugurated by Paine and his contemporaries was capable of developing the evils of the present day, what might a hundred years of so complex a system as State Socialism be expected to produce?

The battle of Freethinkers is against privileges granted to the church by government, and this battle they are now fighting with a ray of hope to encourage them. That ray, in my poor opinion, will not be any brighter when Nationalism has multiplied the functions of the State and given us a swarm of officials to hold the balance of power.

The Importance of the Ideal.

[John Ruskin.]

Remember always that the most important part of the history of man is that of his imagination. What he actually does, is always in great part accidental; it is at best a partial fulfilment of his purpose; and what we call history is often, as I said, merely a record of the external accidents which befall men getting together in large crowds. The real history of mankind is that of the slow advance of resolved deed following laboriously just thought; and all the greatest men live in their purpose and effort more than it is possible for them to live in reality. If you would praise them worthily, it is for what they conceived and felt; not merely for what they have done.

It is therefore a true historian's work diligently to separate the deed from the imagination; and when these become inconsistent, to remember that the imagination, if precious at all, is indeed the most precious. It is no matter how much, or how little of the two first books of Livy may be literally true. The history of the Romans is the history of the nation which could *conceive* the battle of the Lake Regillus. I have rowed in rough weather on the Lake of the four cantons often enough to know that the legend of Tell is, in literal detail, absurd: but the history of Switzerland is that of the people who expressed their imagination of resistance to injustice by that legend, so as to animate their character vitally to this day.

A Politician's Blunder.

[Today.]

The Boston "Herald" directs attention to an amusing blunder committed by Senator Hoar. In an article explanatory of his protectionist views he avers that one of the reasons why he believes in protection is "because the industries so fostered will develop the skill and brain power of (his) countrymen, and raise the people of the United States to the first rank in intelligence among the nations of the earth." Verily, while "conscience makes cowards of us all," insincerity often makes dullards of us. In order to defend protection, this experienced politician not only permits himself to utter something which is not true — for, with all their faults, to which we are not at all blind, the American people are not inferior in intelligence to any other people, — but something which, if it were true, no politician would even dare to admit or betray any suspicion of. Suppose that the people of this country *are* inferior to other nations, — would any Fourth-of-July orator, any office-seeker or holder, any politician, in short, dare to hint at this inferiority? Let the voter be the most hopeless of idiots, and the politician will look at him with reverence, and assure him that he is noble in reason, infinite in faculties, like an angel in action, and in apprehension like a god.

Modern Marriage.

[Alphonse Karr.]

To a woman in society what is called gallantry, amiability, or even politeness, consists in saying to her in a more or less disguised, more or less ornate, more or less new, fashion that one would be happy to sleep with her. When husbands escort their wives through *salons*, bejewelled, bare-necked, exhibiting samples of the beauty of their bodies, do they not seem to say: "I wager my wife against yours," each vainly hoping to trick, to keep his own and win the other's? Amid these the bachelor quietly forms for himself a harem composed of the wives of his friends upon whom he leaves the burden of feeding and dressing them.

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